

Luke 11:27-36  
Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

Image Church // The Gospel of Luke: Inverted Kingdom Wk. 15

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Good morning Image Family, really grateful for the opportunity to open God's word again with you this morning. I had the privilege to preach just a couple weeks ago and so if you are new around here, maybe only been a few times...

You might be asking yourself, "Wait, is this guy the pastor or the other guy?" I can assure you I am not, my name is Bryson and I am the college Pastor here at Image Church

Let me just say a quick thank you to those who call Image Church home, thank you for your prayer and generosity, because of you we are able to be on Kennesaw States campus making disciples, without you, we can't do that, so thank you for partnering with us to reach KSU!

I also want to take a quick second to say **thank you to Pastor Mike McKee**, I am so grateful for him as our pastor, I have had the honor to watch first hand as he faithfully leads and serves Image Church. It has been a joy to sit under his leadership

So thank you Pastor Mike for all you do, for the countless hours you invest in us, and **an even bigger thank you to his wife Ashely** for all she does for Image Church. THANK YOU BOTH! We love you guys!

So, now that I made myself get a little emotional...

We are continuing in our journey through the book of Luke, we are in a series called **Inverted Kingdom...**

what we're seeing in the **gospel of Luke** is how Jesus comes and flips everything upside down... We see that Jesus is the unsuspecting King that came as a fulfillment of God's promise for salvation...

We see that he is not only the means of salvation but also the model for how saved people should live!!

The call of the Christian life is to believe in the work of Jesus, but also to follow the person of Jesus

That is exactly what we will see in our text this morning...

So if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Luke 11.... we will pick up in vs 27

Just to make sure that we are all on the same page... let LOOK back real quick on what is happening so far.

Last week Pastor Mike covered the Lord's prayer... right after this Jesus is going to cast out another demon.... cuz you know, Jesus can do that kind of stuff

The demon made this man mute, and when Jesus healed him, the man spoke and everyone marveled, they couldn't believe it!

But some in the crowd that had gathered began to say things like **"He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons," 16 while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven.**

So Jesus is addressing the crowd and as he does this we get to vs27

**27 As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" 28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"**

Um, OK... SO here we have a woman in the crowd who has been listening to him, and she shouts out "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed"

Talk about an attention grabber... I feel like that would be the same as me standing here right now and one of you standing up and yelling this...

You would have our attention!!! But Jesus doesn't rebuke her, or get mad... he simply redirects with his own "beatitude" if you will

**“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”**

Here we see Jesus is not looking for simple affirmation or praise... **Jesus is after people responding with belief that leads action... OBEDIENCE<sup>1</sup>**

I touched on this a couple weeks ago... Jesus requires immediate obedience! We hear the Word of God and we keep it! We respond with actually doing what He says!

This seems and feel so straightforward. Ok this is what the Bible says, so now do it, right?? **Oh but only if that were true...** we are really good at over complicating, blowing things out of proportion

Or we lack faith to believe that what God has in fact declared is whats best - we tend to live and operate as if we know whats best, *“Hey God, why don’t you take a break, I got this... I will let you know when to step in”*

Am I lying? **Have you read the Old Testament?** Have you read about Israel? In case you haven’t let me summarize real quick...

Israel loves God and is faithful... Israel decides nope we can’t trust God, how about we worship an idol? Ok, lets do that... God sends them into exile or slavery etc.

God we are really sorry, we will trust you and honor you... God delivers them through various people... wash... rinse... repeat over and over....

We read those stories and go “What is wong with them?? Why do they keep doing this... but check this out...

**THATS WHAT WE DO... WE DO THE SAME THING!!!!**

We dont trust and believe that God is good, that he is our provider, that what he says is true and right... God has clearly laid out for us that which is best... that which leads to fullness of life,

But we forget, we lose sight, we get distracted!!

It’s why we don’t give even though we are called to be generous. We say all the time here at Image, God doesn't want generosity from you, he wants it for you!!

Which means living lives marked by generosity is a part of the Christian life... but here is the thing... I don’t know that there would be many here that I need to **convince** that generosity is a part of what it means to follow Jesus... Right

For most of us... **the issue isn’t the truth itself but the responsive action of walking those truths in our lives daily**

**This is the fight of the Christian life... walking in obedience to the things we know to be true!**

It’s why we don’t serve, God doesn’t need you to serve, you should serve for you, to serve the body of Christ, to give of your time for the sake of the body for the kingdom. Using your talents to serve the body

It’s why we don’t engage the poor, or leverage our time, talent and treasure - we hear but we don’t respond.

If Jesus is my savior, then he must also be Lord - and if he says do these things, then we do them... this isn’t a do do do... or as Pastor Mike calls it, a do do sermon... it's a gospel response!

**We hear, we believe, we respond with action**

**James 1 tells us to not only be hearers of the word, but doers also and**

I believe this next passage is really going to open wide the why for us...

This is what is happening here... its actually pretty incredible...

So if you are not familiar with Jonah (or even if you are) let me summarize real quick because I think its going to be super helpful as we read the text and make the connection and grasp what exactly is happening...

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<sup>1</sup> Bock, Darrell L. Baker Exegetical Commentary

So Jonah, hears from God, God tells him to go to Nineveh and call them out on their evil - but Jonah doesn't listen and he flees to Tarshish - he is disobedient

He hops on a ship to sail to Tarshish but the ship gets caught in a great storm... the men on board realize it's Jonah's fault, Jonah tells them to throw him overboard and **they will be saved.**

They do and a great big fish (*not a whale despite what your Sunday School felt board had on it*) swallows Jonah and Jonah spends three days and three nights in belly of the fish

In the midst of this, Jonah repented and then he is spit up on the beach and goes on to Nineveh

He preaches maybe the shortest sermon ever, summed up "Hey, um you will be destroyed" and it's says **"And the people believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5)** Talk about the power of Word!!!

**They repent of their sin and believe God!!!** But Jonah is mad about it... boy he is mad... his response "Man, God I knew you were gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

So he goes and sits down with the city in sight to wait and see what happens.

But God is going to show just how true Jonah's statement is... God I knew you were gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

Which brings us back to our text...

**29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the**

**earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.**

What Jesus is saying here is that this generation, all they want is a sign, another sign...

Mind you, Jesus has been performing signs and wonders all over the place... he healed the sick, cast out demons, walked on water, fed the 5,000, water into wine and on and on

Remember when he fed the 5,000 they came back for more, **not for more of Jesus but for more signs and wonders**

Jesus says, *You evil generation, you seek for a sign but no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah!!!*

Wait what??? See Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh... they saw, they heard and they believed and Jesus says so I will be the sign to this generation, but you won't believe!!!

The queen of the South (Queen of Sheba) came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, she had many questions for him, and he was able to answer all of them

But Jesus says that The queen of Sheba will rise and condemn them, she responded with belief... they do not

for she came from the ends of the earth to seek truth and Jesus says **"behold, something greater than Solomon is here.**

The men of nineveh will rise up at judgment with this generation and condemn it for they repented and believed when Jonah preached and again **"Behold something greater than Jonah is here!"**

Please see what is happening here... this is so important for us!

**Jesus is not just the sign... he is what they all have been waiting for, he is the fulfillment of it all!!!**

The sign of Jonah was a foreshadow of what is to come, the sign of Jonah points to Jesus... Jesus and what he will accomplish

The very thing they have been waiting for, the one they have been looking for, is standing in front of them and they miss it! Jesus is even saying that it will be better for the Queen of Sheba and the people of Nineveh on the day of Judgement

than it will be for them, because at the sign given to the queen and the ninevites they believed!! But here before them is the ultimate sign, and yet they don't believe!!!

We have to understand this...

- Jesus is the **greater** Adam
- Jesus is the greater Abraham, Isaac or Jacob
- Jesus is the **greater** Moses
- Jesus is the **greater** David
- Jesus is the **greater** Solomon
- Jesus is the greater Jonah
- The greater prophets
- The greater king
- the greater ruler
- Jesus is greater than all that came before him

All of them, all of these people that we read about in the Old Testament who did incredible things, who are in many ways heroes of the faith, but each and every one of them fell short

All of them are mere place holders, a sign all pointing to One who would come, who would be the fulfillment of all things, **All of Scripture is weaving together a story of God's goodness, His faithfulness, His provision, His glory, His promises**

and would culminate in the One who would come and once and for all settle the debt of sin that is owed!

Tim Keller tells us, *"Jesus is the prophet Jonah should have been... Jesus did not merely weep for us; he died for us. Jonah went outside the city hoping to witness its condemnation, but Jesus went outside the city to die on a cross to accomplish salvation"*<sup>2</sup>

Jonah's three days and three nights in the belly of the fish point to Jesus

**who will go to the cross, who would die for our sin, our sin put him there, and he would go and spend 3 days in the grave but on the third day he would rise victorious over sin and death.**

That is our sign... that is the sign that Jesus Christ is Lord over all, that he is in fact the Messiah!!

And we have the incredible opportunity to be on this side of the cross... where we know the sign... we know what Jesus has done... we know what Jesus accomplished

Through Christ on the cross grace and mercy and the forgiveness of sin have now been offered to us

**Now we must believe!!! And belief requires responsive action!!!**

So you see, we don't do for the sake of doing! To hear the word and keep it flows from a response to the gospel

That we are so overtaken by the goodness of God, that out of his love for us, he would send Jesus to rescue us. We are now compelled to keep his word!!! His love compels us, not duty or obligation, it is a response to being loved by God!

**As we look to our next few verses, it will really unpack for us how this even possible!!!**

**33 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness.**

<sup>2</sup> Tim Keller - [The Prodigal Prophet: Jonah and the Mystery of God's Mercy](#)

**35 Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”**

So here Jesus gives two truths that we must understand...

### **1. Jesus is the light that has come into the world**

It's like this... if you are in a dark room, the power is out and you can't see. You need a light source, right?

So you have an old lantern, you put some oil in and you light it, it is the only light source you have... you wouldn't then take the light to the basement, leave it there and then come back upstairs... no! That would be crazy

You would place it in the best possible location for all who come in so that they can see it... The picture is a simple one: no one goes to the trouble of lighting an oil lamp only to put it in a place where it will not illuminate the room.<sup>3</sup>

One pastor says it like this “*I have set a lamp in the world: my wise and powerful presence—greater than Solomon and greater than Jonah. I am the light of the world . I am the lamp that must not be hidden or missed.*”<sup>4</sup>

The light of the world, the one who came as light into darkness, the only one who can make away for us... he is standing right in front of them and they miss it!!!

The point here is that Jesus' teaching is no secret, the signs and wonders he has performed aren't a secret!

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<sup>3</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51-24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1099-1100). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>4</sup> John Piper [“Be Carefull Lest the Light in You be Darkness”](#)

One author writes this “*The response called for is unlike the crowd's action. If one does not receive, it is not because the lamp has been hidden, but because there has been no response to the light*”<sup>5</sup>

A common theme throughout the gospels and the NT is responsive action, meaning we respond to the good news of the gospel. We are 2,000 years removed from the cross and resurrection and we have the complete and inerrant Word of God, we know what happened and we know how this all ends

### **We hear, we believe, we respond with action**

The second truth we must understand is...

### **2. We must fix our eyes on Jesus**

This is a significant truth for us to understand, to believe, and to fight daily for this to be reality for us - that your eye is the lamp of your body, when it is healthy your body is full of light but when it is bad your body is full of darkness!

*“Good eyes” admit light; bad ones do not. The implication is that the individual is responsible for receiving light. The eye is thus a “lamp”, not in the sense that it emits light, but that through it the body receives light. The real source of light is outside the body; if we think we can generate our own light, we must beware lest that inner “light” prove to be darkness.*<sup>6</sup>

We are responsible for receiving the light..., The eye is the lamp of the body - when you are looking at the right thing you are healthy

### **We must fix our eyes on Jesus, we must look to the founder and perfecter of our faith**

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<sup>5</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51-24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1100). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>6</sup> Liefeld, W. L. (1984). [Luke](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, p. 954). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

**We must look to the one who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light** (1 Peter 2:9)

We have to look to Christ, we must behold his **glory**, his **beauty**, his **majesty**, we must look to Christ and hold fast, clinging for dear life

Until Christ becomes so beautiful to us that everything else fades away, where everything becomes (*as Paul says*) rubbish, we will struggle to live lives of responsive action!

The reason why we don't put into practice the things that we have heard is because we don't really know the one who is telling us... it's the same problem we see all throughout Luke

If we really understand the reality of our sin... and the glory and beauty of who Jesus is and what he has done... would our lives not look different??

**It's hard... it can be so hard sometimes I get it, I really do.** Sometimes its momentary distractions right... like we are all ADHD Christians

We are looking to Jesus, looking to Jesus, right, looking to Jesus **SQUIRRELL...** something comes that temporarily pulls our eyes off Jesus. that could be

- stressful situation
- work
- family
- financial stress

Or maybe its a desire you have - something you want... **Princess and I desire to buy a home..**

- **small apartment - frustrations with 4 of us in there**
- **Tina and Daniel came to visit last weekend**
- **The Lords provision in finding it**
- **We can't get distracted to pursue it - it will happen when it happens**

A moment in time in which we forget the good news of the gospel, we take our eyes off Jesus

But at other times, our eyes began to shift focus and we began to look away from Christ and we began to fix our eyes on things other than Jesus!

We stop clinging to the truths of the gospel, the promises of God...

This is almost never a (wake up one morning and decide, "I am going to stop looking to Jesus today) it's almost always a slow fade

Here's the thing though, **as we begin to take our eyes off Jesus, we will always begin to look to something else, always!** We will replace Jesus with whatever it is that we believe will make us happy!

We stop participating in and prioritizing the things that God has ordained or put in place to help us keep our eyes fixed on him! It's almost as if God knew it wouldn't be easy so he laid out for us just how we should live...

There are many things God has put in place or laid out for us that will help us keep our eyes fixed on him and **I want to highlight a few of them for you**

Because as I thought about, how do we do this Christian life... how do we pursue Jesus above all else, how do we remain faithful to the end, **how do we in the midst of a fallen and broken world pursue holiness!**

I just kept coming back to these things and I believe Scripture is extremely clear on it... as believers if we are being made to look more and more like Christ each day, I believe these things will have the biggest impact on our lives...

## **1. The body of Christ - The Church**

For many of you, when you hear the word **church** you think about a **destination**, a place you **go** to on Sundays... Or a building that's associated with a denomination... Or a religious activity that happens each week...

We live in a culture where for so long the church has been a **place** instead of a **people**... But that's not what the church is... The church at its core is a

group of people who are **committed to Jesus**... And yes, the church gathers, but it gathers together for a reason...

The word Church is the English translation from the word **Ekklesia** that means: an assembly or gathering of people who are called to specific purpose...

What we have to understand is that the church was established by God for a very specific purpose... And that is... **To be the vehicle by which the message and ministry of Jesus advances throughout the world**...<sup>7</sup>

The local church serves so many purposes, things vital to walking out our faith and living on mission

#### **The local church:**

- *Is God's plan A for reaching the world*
- *the primary vehicle of our discipleship*
- *primary means of community*
- *where we sit under the teaching of scripture*
- *pastors who shepherd the flock*

I love the simplicity in how one author puts its

- **The local church exist for your good, for the good others, and for the world**<sup>8</sup>
- *Community, discipleship, serving, generosity, evangelism, missions etc*
- **the local church is the vehicle that drives all of it**

We can't follow Jesus and not be committed to the local church, it's the very thing designed by God to help us!

## **2. Prayer and the Word of God**

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<sup>7</sup> Mike McKee "The Start of a Movement"

<sup>8</sup> Jenny Manley "[Why We Need the Church](#)"

1 Peter 1 tells us to pursue holiness... **"to be holy, For I am holy"** and we cannot pursue holiness apart from prayer and God's Word...

I want to specifically speak to the Word as Pastor Mike preached an incredible sermon on prayer last week, so if you missed that be sure to go back and check that out ASAP!

The Word of God is simply that, God's Word, it is the primary way God has chosen to reveal himself to us... we can know who God is, what He has done, how we should live

The Word of God, *encourages us, challenges us, corrects us, equips us* - to pursue God is to be in his Word. We can't know God, apart from it.

#### **Hebrews 4:12**

**For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

God's word is living and active, life itself is found in God's Word. I believe each of us would affirm the importance of God's word, our need for it, to read it, to know it

But how often do we actually live as though that's true????

We are to feast on the Word of God, and we approach it with expectation, that God is going to move!<sup>9</sup> We believe that God's Word is vital to life, that Jesus is the bread of life,

and the Word is Christ revealed to us, that we are so aware of our neediness for Christ that we boldly come before the throne in prayer and we hunger for the Word.

That we have access to the God of the universe, the creator of all things and our access comes directly through Prayer and His Word! Two of the most essential things God has given us

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<sup>9</sup> Josh Ferguson "Word and Spirit" WinCon21

And if we are honest with ourselves, we neglect them both... life is too busy, I don't know how, or where to even begin - Is that you???

I have great news for you, the body of Christ (the local church) Image Church, is here to equip you and train you, to encourage you, to walk with you - I don't care if you say "I have been in church for 20 years and I don't know how to pray or read the Bible"

Congratulations you have taken step #1 - now take step #2 tell us that... there is no shame, no guilt and don't be embarrassed... God is wanting you to know him, and you have access through prayer and his word, let us help!

Others simply neglect prayer and the Word, we simply don't understand the power each of them have in our lives...

We fail to see that, like Pastor Mike, said last week. ***That prayer is not a discipline, it is a posture of dependence based out of desperation***<sup>10</sup>

**And that the Word of God contains the words to life itself. By neglecting both we are denying the access and power that they have to enable us to live faithful lives, and to pursue holiness.**

We desperately need both!

### **3. Community**

Being a part of a community is vital to the Christian walk... the reality is that we can not do this alone, and we were never meant to!

The fact of the matter is that we need one another... There is so much that God does in us and through us when we live as a community! We learn more about following Jesus when our lives are intertwined with other believers

And I'm not talking about seeing some people a couple Sundays and a couple Tuesday nights a month... I am talking about genuine day after day, in the nitty gritty of life

Where a group of people are committed to one another - the type of commitment where you know everyone one else might leave... but these people, they your ride or die

They know everything about you and you them **and you still are committed** because let's be honest... relationships can be hard, and messy but when you can sit in the mess and still say I love you

I mean that's the real deal... you can say that to your spouse (still hard sometimes) your kids (they can be crazy) but to someone where **all you have in common is the gospel???**

That is difficult... but I think those are the types of communities we can have when we commit, we push through, we extend grace and we love

But that's not where it ends!!! Think about what could be accomplished for the kingdom of God with a community that lives and loves like that!!!

**Community is not just for those on the inside...** those with the secret handshake

If we are not careful, our communities can become like Jeff Vanderstelt describes "*“[They] can subtly become primarily a support group that is only concerned about one another, forgetting the mission of making disciples”*"<sup>11</sup>

Community is not just primarily a holy huddle, we gather to meet our own needs (*that's true in one sense as needs are met*) **but rather now a committed group of people**

that "*“see themselves as the church in our city, instead of seeing church as only an event they attend on Sunday. [You] learn how to see all of life as sacred and every action as part of God's missionary work in the world.*

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<sup>10</sup> Mike McKee "Prayer"

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<sup>11</sup> Jeff Vanderstelt "Saturate"



*[You] began to see that he is in [you], working through [you] in the normal stuff of life.”<sup>12</sup>*

But we will be hard pressed to get here popping in out... I understand work schedules, logistics of childcare etc. **But we have to push through, we fight for community, because we need it**

It is crucial to our walk, and beneficial to building the kingdom of God through the everyday, ordinary, normal stuff of life.

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## Conclusion \*\*\*VAMP\*\*\*

So what do we do??? How are we supposed to walk this out??? **We fix our eyes on Jesus... he is the only way, all of Scripture points to him... don't miss it... dont miss him!**

When we fix our eyes on Jesus, we begin to love him and cherish him... we recognize that Jesus is the only thing in this world that matters... but also

we know we are so loved by him... I mean check this out... **we are loved by God** - he spoke the world into existence, he holds it all together and the fact that a God who could do all of this... **loves me, loves you**

So we cling to the promises of God, we recognize his goodness, his faithfulness... we fix our eyes on the very person of Jesus, who is God in the flesh, and lived the life we couldn't and died the death meant for us, Gods love put on display through Christ on the cross

**And we have access to God**, he has made himself known through his Word, we can go to him through prayer... **we have access!!!**

And God put in place, how we follow him here on earth, how we pursue him, how we make him known, he gave us the church, he gave us community, he gave us each other!!!

Some of you need to **join a community group today!** You can do that at our connection tent outside! **You can't wait, please don't live life in isolation, we need the body of Christ!**

Some of you need to become **covenant members** here at Image Church... [imageatl.com/membership](http://imageatl.com/membership). And you need to commit to the local church, to be a part of a local body of Christ.

Others of us, we need to recommit to these things... we need to be here! We need to be at community group... I get it can be hard... My wednesday night is rough sometimes...

Princess and I Rush home from work, get some dinner ready, kids fed and dressed and out the door... I told Princess the other night... our community group literally should move our start time back 15 minutes and just don't tell us, then we can be on time!!!

Its hard... but its worth it. **When we disengage from the Sunday Gathering and from community groups we are functionally saying, I don't need the body of Christ... and that's a lie from the enemy who wants nothing more than to see you isolated and alone.**

And for all of us, **we must fix our eyes on Jesus**, gaze up on the beauty of the Lord, fight to believe daily, surrender to Jesus as Lord, rest in your identity as sons and daughters of the most high king,

**Jesus is the light of the world, fix your eyes on him and respond by living in obedience!**

## Lets Pray

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<sup>12</sup> ibid

